

APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR ORGANIZING AND DISPLAYING WALLCOVERING SAMPLES

BACKGROUND

[0001] The present inventive subject matter relates to the wallcovering arts. It is particularly applicable to organizing and displaying wallcovering samples, and it will be described with particular reference thereto. However, application is also found in connection with other like samples.

[0002] Wallcoverings, as are known in the art, come in many different varieties of styles, each having a different outward appearance, feel and/or aesthetic properties. They may have any number of printed designs or patterns on their outward facing side. The outward surface finishes can range from glossy to matte. The wallcoverings can include different textured or embossed patterns or designs. They can be made out of different materials including, e.g., paper, polyvinylchloride (PVC), cloth, etc. Typically, wallcoverings also come in many different colors or color schemes and/or patterns.

[0003] Architects, interior designers, home owners and other individuals are often confronted with the challenge of selecting a desired wallcovering for hanging on one or more walls in one or more rooms of a building or house. Commonly, the selection is made from a large number of various different wallcoverings. Accordingly, it is desirable to have a way of organizing and displaying the various different wallcoverings so as to simplify the selection process.

[0004] A line or series of wallcoverings is often defined by a set of wallcoverings having one or more common design elements. For example, a designer or manufacturer of wallcovering typically produces a wallcovering line having a given printed and/or textured pattern which defines the line.

However, the various wallcoverings that are part of the line vary in other design aspects, e.g., having different colors or color schemes, being made from different material, having different surface finishes, having different constructions (e.g., different backings), etc.

[0005] Traditionally, wallcovering samples are presented on what is known in the art as a tip card. The tip card usually includes a bi-folded or tri-folded cardboard or other firm base onto which the wallcovering samples of a particular line are mounted flat next to one another. It is customary that a tip card include samples of a given wallcovering line or pattern from the same designer or manufacturer. Generally, the wallcovering samples presented on the tip card will include all the available different colors or color schemes for that line or pattern of wallcovering. That is to say, tip cards generally organize the wallcovering samples by lines or patterns that are defined by a one or more common design elements other than color.

[0006] Similarly, wallcovering samples are also known to be presented in books or binders (e.g., three ring binders or the like). The pages of the binder usually provide a cardboard or other firm base onto which samples are mounted flat next to one another. The entire binder may be dedicated to one line of wallcovering and include samples for any number of different colors or color schemes in which that line is available. Alternately, a binder may contain a number of lines or patterns, e.g., the collection of lines for a particular designer or manufacturer, with each page or a number of adjacent pages presenting a distinct line or pattern including the different colors or color schemes in which that line or pattern is available. In any event, the wallcovering samples are again organized and/or grouped together by lines or patterns or otherwise by one or more common design elements other than color or color scheme.

[0007] The organizing structure of typical tip cards and/or sample binders can at times be disadvantageous. In many instances, wallcovering selections are primarily or largely made based on the wallcovering's color or color scheme, e.g., with the other design elements, such as the printing or texture pattern, material, finish, construction etc., being a secondary or lesser

consideration. Accordingly, for example, with traditional tip cards, the individual selecting the wallcovering has to check and/or review any number of tip cards to determine which designs or styles come in the color or color scheme desired. Moreover, the fact that the samples having the desired color or color scheme are on different tip cards or in different binders can make it difficult to compare the samples side by side to one another once a color or color scheme has been chosen. Further, the manner in which the samples are typically mounted flat the in tip cards and/or binders further can make it difficult to coordinate the wallcovering samples of the color or color scheme that is being considered with other decorating elements or samples (e.g., carpet, upholstery, paint, etc.) selected for the room.

[0008] The present inventive subject matter contemplates a new and improved apparatus and/or method for organizing and displaying wallcovering samples that overcomes the above-mentioned limitations and others.

SUMMARY

[0009] In accordance with one aspect, a system and/or apparatus is provided for organizing and displaying wallcovering samples. The system includes: a plurality of wallcovering samples, each sample having a color characteristics; and, a plurality of sample holders, each holder being dedicated to a different color group and configured to hold a set of the samples; wherein the samples are organized into the holders based upon their respective color characteristics such that each holder holds a set of samples having like color characteristics.

[0010] In accordance with another aspect, a method of organizing and displaying wallcovering samples includes: identifying a plurality of wallcovering samples by a color characteristic; sorting the samples into sets having like color characteristics; and, holding the sets of samples together in color groups, each color group being distinguished by that color characteristic which caused the samples to be sorted into the set so held.

[0011] Numerous advantages and benefits of the present inventive subject matter will become apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art upon reading and understanding the present specification.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

[0012] The present invention may take form in various components and arrangements of components, and in various steps and arrangements of steps. The drawing is only for purposes of illustrating a preferred embodiment and is not to be construed as limiting. Further, it is to be appreciated that the drawing is not to scale.

[0013] The FIGURE is a diagrammatic illustration showing a slip case and wallcovering sample decks embodying aspects of the present inventive subject matter.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0014] For clarity and simplicity, the present specification shall refer to structural and/or functional elements and/or components that are commonly known in the art and/or understood by those of ordinary skill without further detailed explanation as to their configuration or operation except to the extent they have been modified or altered in accordance with and/or to accommodate the preferred embodiment presented herein.

[0015] With reference to the FIGURE, an organizing and/or displaying system or apparatus **A** for wallcovering samples includes a slip case **10** configured to house or hold a plurality of sample holders or decks **20**, each deck **20** containing a plurality of wallcovering samples **30**. The slip case **10** is a rack, stand, cabinet, box or the like that includes a number of individual divided compartments or slots **12** in the front thereof. Suitably, there is a separate slot **12** for each deck **20**. The slots **12** are sized to receive the decks **20** which are selectively placed therein for storage. Optionally, the slip case **10** includes a foot or base **14** upon which the slip case **10** rests when placed on a suitable horizontal surface, e.g., a table top, counter, floor, etc. A front face **16** of the base **14** optionally provides a location for displaying a

manufacturer's or designer's logo, pricing information, or other information related to the wallcoverings or the samples **30**. Opposing sides, a top and a back complete the outer housing of the slip case **10**. Optionally, the slip case **10** is hung or otherwise mounted via its backside on a wall or other vertical surface.

[0016] As desired, one or more decks **20** are able to be selectively removed from their respective slots **12** in the slip case **10**, e.g., to review or otherwise observe the wallcovering samples **20** contained therein. The divided slots **12** provide easy access to a selected deck **20** inasmuch as a lower deck **20** may be removed from and/or placed in its slot **12** while the decks **20** above it remain stored and/or undisturbed in their respective slots **12**. As shown in the FIGURE, two decks **20** have been removed from their respective slots **12** for illustrative purposes.

[0017] Suitably, each deck **20** is portable and/or hand-hold in size for easy manipulation, grasping, placement in and/or removal from the slip case **10**, etc. The deck **20** is optionally cardboard or another suitably rigid or firm material that forms a back or bottom surface **22**, a front face **24** and an upper lip **26**. The bottom surface **22** is suitably shaped and sized to substantially match the shape and size of the samples **30** contained in the deck **20**, thereby providing support under the same, e.g., when the deck **20** is removed from the slip case **10**. As shown, the front face **24** is generally normal to the bottom surface **22** and arranged so as to face outward or be otherwise viewable when the deck **20** is stored in its respective slot **12** in the slip case **10**. Accordingly, the significance of which will be more fully appreciated upon further reading of the specification, the front face **24** provides a surface which can be colored or color coded, and/or have information, writing or other indicia placed thereon, to identify the group or set of samples **30** contained in the deck **20**.

[0018] As shown, the upper lip **26** is generally normal to the front face **24** and generally parallel with the bottom surface **22**. The upper lip **26** and bottom surface **22** are suitably space apart from one another and have positioned therebetween the samples **30** one atop another in a stacked fashion. Suitably,

a cylindrical pin **28** extends between the upper lip **26** and the bottom surface **22** through holes in the samples **30** thereby securing and/or holding the samples **30** in the deck **20** so that the samples **30** can be selectively rotated about pin **28** to some degree. Accordingly, as shown in the FIGURE, one or more of the samples **30** are able to be selectively fanned out as desired to reveal those samples **30** of interest, regardless of where they are stacked in the deck **20**. Suitably, the pin **28** is selectively attached to and detachable from one or both the upper lip **26** and the bottom surface **22** so that samples **30** can be added to and/or removed from the deck **20** as desired. Optionally, rivets, nuts and bolts, or other like fastener are employed as the pins **28**.

[0019] Suitably, the wallcovering samples **30** are rectangular or other shaped swatches of the actual wallcoverings they represent. Generally, the wallcoverings are formed from a sheet or substrate material (e.g., paper, PVC or other vinyl or polymer material, cloth, etc.) having an outward facing side intended to be viewed when the wallcovering is hung on a wall or other like surface, and optionally include: printing and/or embossing on the outward facing side; a backing layer bond to the substrate opposite the outward facing side that imparts dimensional stability to the wallcovering; an adhesive layer formed on the backing layer for affixing the wallcovering to a wall or other like surface; a protective film or other layer formed on the outward facing side of the substrate, e.g., to resist marking or staining and improve cleanability; etc. Optionally, the wallcoverings from which the samples **30** are taken may be any suitable wallcovering known in the art.

[0020] The wallcoverings for which samples **30** are provided optionally come in a variety of different printed patterns or designs, a variety of different textured or embossed patterns or designs, a range of different surface finishes (e.g., from glossy to matte), a number of different materials (e.g., paper, cloth, PVC, etc.), various different constructions, and a number of different colors or color schemes. Suitably, the samples **30** are organized in the decks **20** such that each deck **20** contains a set of samples **30** belonging to a common color group. That is to say, the samples **30** are sorted into sets based on their color or color scheme rather than based on their style or other

design elements (e.g., their printed or embossed pattern, their finish, their material, their construction, etc.), and each set is then placed in the deck **20** containing the corresponding color group to which the deck **20** is dedicated. In this manner, each deck **20** contains the different available styles of samples **30** that all share similar colors or color schemes. For a multi-color sample **30**, the sample is suitably placed in the deck **20** containing the color group that corresponds to the predominate color of the multi-color sample **30**. Alternately, for a multi-color sample **30**, identical samples **30** may be placed in a plurality of the decks **20**, e.g., in each deck **20** containing the color group of the corresponding colors in the multi-color sample **30**, or at least in those decks **20** containing the color groups that correspond to the most prominent colors in the multi-color sample **30**.

[0021] As previously indicated, the face **24** of each deck **20** is colored, color coded, or otherwise provided with information, writing or indicia that indicates the color group for the samples **30** in that deck **20**. For example, the red color group deck **20** includes the samples **30** of available wallcovering styles (e.g., including a variety of different printed or embossed patterns, a variety of different finishes, a variety of different materials, a variety of different constructions, etc.) that are red in color or have a predominately red color scheme; the green color group deck **20** includes the samples **30** of available wallcovering styles that are green in color or have a predominately green color scheme; and likewise for blue, violet, yellow, gray, gold, pink and so on for other color groups. Of course, the extent to which the various samples **30** are divided into decks **20** of distinct colors groups optionally varies with the size of the slip case **10** and/or number of decks **20** employed, as well as based on the number of different colors or color schemes identified in the samples **30** being organized and/or displayed. For example, a red color group is optionally distinct from a pink color group and the samples **30** accordingly sorted into distinct decks **20** provide there are a sufficient number of decks **20** employed to have one dedicated to both color groups. Similarly, the division of, or distinction between, hues is likewise determined. That is to say, e.g., the division of green hues from green-yellow hues from yellow hues

is selectively determined based upon the number of decks **20** that are being employed and/or the variety of different colors or color schemes present in the samples **30** being organized and/or displayed. Additionally, it is to be appreciated, that the color groups are optionally designated by other descriptive indications of color as are customarily used in the wall covering arts, e.g., blush, terracotta, ocean blues, verde, olive greens, cool neutrals, creamy neutrals, warm neutrals, spice, warm grey, copper, metallics, etc. Optionally, one or more decks **20** are dedicated to a color group defined by a color characteristics other than hue, e.g., based upon color intensity. That is to say, one deck **20** may contain samples **30** that are characterized by vibrant or high intensity colors, while another contains samples **30** that are characterized by dull or low intensity colors.

[0022] While the illustrated sample holders are configured as fan decks **20**, alternately, samples **30** are optionally arranged and/or held in holders, e.g., tip cards, hangsets, flip decks, etc.. That is to say, the holders may be configured as tip cards or flip decks with each one containing a set of samples **30** which are members of the color group for which the holder is designated. In this manner, the samples **30** are still organized by their color or color scheme. Note, a flip deck is similar to the illustrated fan deck, except that rather than being selectively fanned out about a common axis transverse to the samples **30**, the samples **30** are held in stacked fashion along a common edge thereof such that a user may selectively flip consecutively through the samples **30** like the pages of a book or a tablet of paper.

[0023] It is to be appreciated that in connection with the particular exemplary embodiment presented herein certain structural and/or function features are described as being incorporated in defined elements and/or components. However, it is contemplated that these features may, to the same or similar benefit, also likewise be incorporated in other elements and/or components where appropriate. It is also to be appreciated that different aspects of the exemplary embodiments may be selectively employed as appropriate to achieve other alternate embodiments suited for desired

applications, the other alternate embodiments thereby realizing the respective advantages of the aspects incorporated therein.

[0024] Additionally, it is to be appreciated that certain elements described herein as incorporated together may under suitable circumstances be stand-alone elements or otherwise divided. Similarly, a plurality of particular functions described as being carried out by one particular element may be carried out by a plurality of distinct elements acting independently to carry out individual functions, or certain individual functions may be split-up and carried out by a plurality of distinct elements acting in concert. Alternately, some elements or components otherwise described and/or shown herein as distinct from one another may be physically or functionally combined where appropriate.

[0025] In short, the present inventive subject matter has been described with reference to preferred embodiments. Obviously, modifications and alterations will occur to others upon reading and understanding the specification. It is intended that the invention be construed as including all such modifications and alterations insofar as they come within the scope of the appended claims or the equivalents thereof.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS: